

**FFA****PACIFIC ISLANDS  
FORUM SECRETARIAT****Pacific  
Community**  
Communauté  
du Pacifique**SPREP**  
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional  
Environment Programme**2<sup>nd</sup> REGIONAL FISHERIES MINISTERIAL MEETING****Virtual  
30 July 2021**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Paper No:</b>	<b>RFMM2.WP03</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Opportunities for Climate Change Action in the Fisheries Sector</b>

**Summary:**

Ministers and officials have been kept updated on climate change impacts on the fisheries sector.

This paper will focus on the ongoing work by CROP partners improving the technical information on the impacts of climate change on fisheries, the opportunities available, and provide some forward looking options. First of all, there are opportunities for accessing climate change finance to introduce adaptation options in the sector to build resilience against climate change impacts. Secondly, this also applies to introducing energy efficiency and renewable energy options for the sector. Thirdly, there is a need for climate justice considerations to be included in Pacific SIDS strategies, including at the WCPFC. Fourthly, securing maritime boundaries remains a high priority. Lastly, there are opportunities for the sector to include its climate change concerns and challenges in the overall negotiating strategy adopted by individual countries and the region as a whole. These concerns can be impactful in a range of international and regional fora, and particularly in the UNFCCC COP26 preparations.

**Recommendations**

Ministers are invited to:

- i. request CROP and relevant agencies to facilitate training on climate change finance including project development;
- ii. task their officials to work with national climate change focal points to have greater access to climate financing, increase advocacy on fisheries as a key issues to be considered in the climate change and oceans Pacific priority area;
- iii. request CROP and other partners to catalogue adaptation and mitigation actions that the fisheries sector can engage on;
- iv. request CROP to prepare documentation on climate change impacts on the fisheries sector, including visualization, for presentation at COP26 including in the Pacific Pavilion, and other relevant international fora; and
- v. support continued collective efforts to secure maritime boundaries.

## **Introduction:**

Ministers and officials have been kept updated on climate change impacts on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. This includes physical impacts on fisheries stocks and their distribution, as well as the contribution of the fisheries sector to emissions causing climate change. These impacts have by no means been reduced and great risks still remain for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Ministers and officials have also been informed of opportunities for climate financing and to engage on climate change, by introducing adaptation measures to protect against impacts, and to reduce emissions from the sector through renewable energy and energy efficiency. Therefore, this paper will focus on those opportunities and provide some forward looking options.

## **Key issues to be considered**

### Ongoing climate change work

CROP partners continue to improve and update the technical information available to assist members in their decision making and adaptation of coastal and oceanic fisheries management and aquaculture to climate change impacts, and to enhance regional capacity for negotiating climate action within national, regional and international fora. This includes the development of decision-ready tools and solutions to operationalise climate adaptation in fisheries and aquaculture policies, planning and management. Components of this work (<http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/twu4u>) were recently endorsed by Heads of Fisheries at SPC's HoF13, including preparation of the final project documentation for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) programme Adapting tuna-dependent Pacific Island communities and economies to climate change, while the recently announced New Zealand MFAT funded 'Climate change and tuna fisheries' project is gratefully acknowledged.

### Access to climate funding

SPREP has been accredited to the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund, and SPC is also accredited to the GCF and have experience in working with sectors to develop suitable climate change project activities. There are also other accredited entities that work in the region such as UNDP, UNEP, FAO, IUCN to name a few. It is therefore suggested that fisheries officials work with national climate change teams to develop adaptation projects for the fisheries sector. It may be that some capacity building will be required for the first phases, so GCF focal points should be approached for inclusion of fisheries in national GCF Country Programmes and any Readiness Proposals to the GCF. SPREP, SPC and other regional agencies can play a role in assisting in the development of proposals. Available tools include the Climate Finance Navigator (to assist in finding the most suited funding agency – see <https://cfn.pacificclimatechange.net/>) and the Adaptation Planning Tool (to assist in formulating the project idea and to develop it into a concept paper – see <https://apt.pacificclimatechange.net/>). In addition, CROP agencies such as SPREP, PIFS and SPC can assist Fisheries Officials to learn more about the funding criteria and templates for different funds to assist with their formulation of project concepts and proposals, including an e-learning platform developed by SPREP that will be accessible to sector officials.

It should also be noted that building resilience in the fisheries sector should be a broad-based responsibility in the region. The private sector has a crucial role in this, and the untapped potential that is there needs to be recognized. The private sector should be assisted in accessing climate funding, not just from the international funds mentioned above, but other sources as well.

Critical to informing where climate finance should support fisheries work in the region is identifying how the sector is being impacted by climate change (migration of tuna), and where the sector could provide alternative livelihoods for other impacts faced by PICs (investment in aquaculture to support food security or diversification of livelihoods). This would come under adaptation funding. In addition, where GHG emissions could be reduced or carbon sinks strengthened there is room for mitigation funding e.g. renewable energy technologies, or energy efficiency modifications or technological upgrades.

### Transition to Clean Energy for the Fisheries sector

As mentioned, there are also opportunities in making the fisheries sector more energy efficient. There are examples of this in the region, such as SPC's Green Port initiative, which could be considered by each country. One option relates to installing renewable energy electricity in port facilities, for usage by cranes, trans-shipment, port transportation, general operations, freezers, and running on-ship power while in port. Solar power for ships at anchor and more energy efficient port operations have been tested successfully by the Pacific Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC-Pacific), and there are opportunities to upscale these trials.

Other options being suggested from the region relate to the energy efficiency of boat outboard engines. For artisanal fisheries this could mean a switch from 2-stroke to 4-stroke and eventually to electric engines. For larger fishing vessels there may be opportunities for biofuel usage or hybrid systems using hydrogen or pure ammonia (as an additive).

For outer island communities there have already been tested examples that assist the reduction of emissions. Solar powered freezers for outer island fish storage have been deployed in some countries and reduce the amount of time that artisanal fishermen have to be out fishing.

There are also opportunities for the fisheries sector to engage in national adaptation planning and GCF country programming through the GCF Readiness Support Programme to ensure fisheries adaptation and mitigation priorities are included.

It is important to note that while these kinds of projects contribute in a small way to mitigation efforts, for SIDS they are also seen as important adaptation investments. Given they ultimately reduce dependency on costly fossil fuels, they will free up those funds for sustainable and resilient development. On top of this, there is now a global push for COVID recovery efforts to be compatible with greener development pathways and investment.

### Collaboration in the preparation for COP26 and other relevant fora

As is now clear from Ministers' and Officials' discussions, there is a greater understanding of the adverse impacts of climate change on the vital fisheries sector. It is in essence a serious situation, in that the region has taken major steps to safeguard the resource, which is of global significance. Yet climate change, to which the region has contributed a miniscule amount, stands poised to disrupt or even eliminate those great strides towards sustainable management. Working through FFA, a member of the One CROP+ team (led by SPREP, and also includes PIFS, SPC, USP, UNEP and UNDP), the fisheries sector should highlight the climate change impacts to this globally important resource, and the sheer lack of equity that these impacts will bring. This could be an area where SPREP and other agencies could provide some targeted support, for example under the EU funded Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) project managed by SPREP, to inform and visualise climate change impacts on fisheries in advance of COP26. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) working group on impacts and adaptation (working group 2) will not be out before COP26 we could use existing science emanating from the IPCC 1.5 report and the Oceans and Cryosphere report. SPREP would suggest agreement around a very targeted Request for Tenders to science communicators to produce this in time for COP26.

The emission reductions potential that has been identified for the fisheries sector, including that described above, while small on a global scale could also be highlighted as part of the contribution from the Pacific to this global challenge.

This could be an area where some targeted support could be provided, for example under the EU funded Pacific Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC-Pacific), through technical assistance and capacity building to promote energy efficiency in maritime transport and port operations. Beyond the UNFCCC process it would bode well for the region to raise these impacts on fisheries in other key international fora. Reinforcing the narrative and call for support across all roads to sustainable development should help to support the mobilisation of various sources of finance required to support sustainable fisheries in the region. Amongst others these include, the UN Decade on Ocean Science (SPC is coordinating the regions effort in this space), the Global Food Systems Summit (SPC is working with FAO to support the regions engagement in this process), BBNJ and related COVID recovery discussions led by the Forum with donors and multilateral development banks.

#### Climate justice considerations for tuna-dependent Pacific SIDS

Climate justice is based on the understanding that climate change is not just an environmental issue but a socio-political issue as well.

It is a fact that Pacific SIDS are heavily dependent on tuna for their economic wellbeing. Pacific SIDS make trivial contributions to GHG emissions and climate change. However, the tuna resources in Pacific SIDS waters are being adversely impacted by climate change, caused by distant-water fishing nations who are responsible for 60% of historical GHG emissions, and who may benefit from the projected shift in some tuna resources to the high seas.

In this respect, climate justice is about accountability and responsibility for correcting injustices by the mechanisms that caused climate change, global production enterprise, and power imbalances. Work to highlight and pursue climate justice for SIDS along these lines is needed. This includes advocacy, at the WCPFC, on rights for fishing in the high seas as a contribution to compensation to Pacific SIDS for damage done to tuna stocks that are a key component of their prospects for sustainable development.

#### Securing maritime boundaries

At RFMM1, Ministers asked that work be undertaken to secure maritime boundaries. This has been ongoing work by several CROP agencies, including through submissions to the International Law Commission. This work is led by the Pacific Islands Forum *FOC Specialist Sub-Committee on Sea-level rise in relation to International Law*, which was established in 2020 to provide a regional Member-led mechanism to support efforts to ensure that Members' maritime entitlements stemming from maritime zones claimed under the 1982 *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* are not challenged or reduced. It was also established in view of the significant and complex international law issues posed by sea-level rise, including on maritime zones, and is expected to operate in a phased/sequenced approach to consider and respond to the range of legal topics considered at the international level, including law of the sea, statehood, and issues related to the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise. Continuing to advocate for the conclusion of outstanding EEZ limits and negotiation of shared boundaries is one element of this strategy as well. The FOC SSC-SLRIL has drafted a normative declaration and aide memoire to this effect, approved earlier this month, which will be presented to leaders for endorsement at the next PIF Leaders Meeting and submission to the ILC.

CROP agencies, including FFA, have been actively supporting the Specialist Sub-Committee on its ongoing efforts.